MARVEL
#19 IN A NINETEEN-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
$1.50 US
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THE STAR BRAND
TM
FINALE!

new universe™

THE STAR BRAND

The **Star Brand**... the most potent object of power the Earth has ever seen. Where it came from, how it arrived on Earth, and what energies it employs are all unfathomable mysteries. Whosoever wields its power can do virtually anything. The only limitation to its use is the imagination and courage of its wielder.

So far, two men of Earth have possessed its power. The first, known only as the *Old Man*, was a Dutch count who acquired the Star Brand some 500 years ago. He kept the power a secret while it grew inside his body, aging his body very slowly. Eventually he realized that the power was too unstable for him to ever control, and on July 22, 1986, the Old Man tried to transfer its power to an asteroid. The flash of energy caused by the transfer atomized the asteroid and sent the Star Brand's awesome energies cascading into space, bombarding the Earth with mutagenic energy. This occurrence, dubbed the White Event, lasted less than two seconds, but had worldwide consequences. Two human beings in every million were affected by those energies and began to change, assuming paranormal forms and abilities.

Realizing that he still possessed a fraction of its nigh-infinite power, the Old Man passed the Star Brand along to another human being, Pittsburgh-born car mechanic *Kenneth Connell*. *Connell* employed the Star Brand energies for months, fending off the Old Man's efforts to test his abilities, and finally decided to assume the dual identity of a costumed hero. But when *Connell* realized that he could not wield the power wisely enough, he too tried to transfer the power to an inanimate object. Soaring ten miles above his home, *Connell* transferred the Star Brand power into a bent dumbbell. This action caused the Star Brand's alien to obliterate everything within a 50-mile wide sphere around it, including the city of Pittsburgh. *Connell*'s body itself was disintegrated in the Black Event, but has since been resurrected by the power of the Star Brand.

Now, everyone who has ever wielded the Star Brand is united for one last cause...

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THE STAR BRAND™ Vol.1, No. 19, May, 1989 . Published by MARVEL COMICS, A NEW WORLD COMPANY, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President. Milton Schiffman, Vice President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION : 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices.** Published monthly.

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Price $1.50 per copy in the U.S. and $2.00 in Canada. Subscription rate $18.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign $24.00.

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POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO STAR BRAND, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 9TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **PRINTED IN CANADA**

FINALE
THE WIND FROM THE PITT BLOWS HOT AS A BREATH OUT OF HADES.
BEHIND A SEETHING MASK OF STEAM THE GREAT VOLCANO GROWS, THE LIVING MAGMA OF THE VIOLATED EARTH OOZING UP TO BUBBLE AND BURN...
...WAITING.
DRY GRASSES STIR, MISTAKING THIS FOR THE SUMMER THEY HAVE NOT FELT IN OVER A YEAR.
BUT HERE, SCARCELY THREE MILES FROM THE CRATER'S EDGE, THE VIOLENCE IS UNFELT.
MADELYNE FELIX DIED FEB. 29, 1988
HERE, THERE IS A STRANGE TRANQUILITY.
HERE THERE IS DEATH.

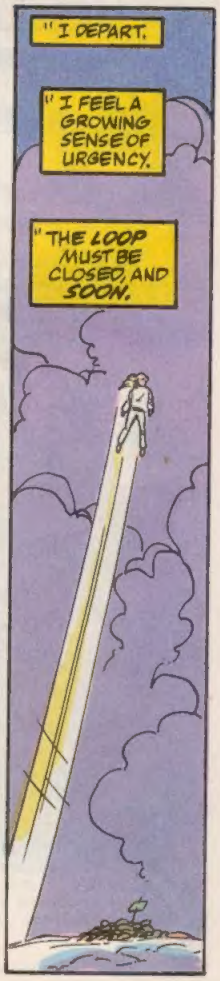
"I DO NOT HAVE A TRUE NAME. I HAVE BEEN CALLED BY SOME 'THE STAR CHILD.'
"BUT I AM NOT OF THE STARS, AND THOUGH I WAS BORN BARELY A YEAR AGO, I AM NO LONGER A CHILD.

"FOR LONG MINUTES I STARE AT THE CRUDE PILE OF ROCKS THAT MARKS THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF THE WOMAN WHO WAS MY MOTHER. THE WOMAN I KILLED.
"THEN, MY POWER REACHES OUT...

"ONE BY ONE THE STONES FLOAT AWAY.
"SLOWLY A SHALLOW DEPRESSION REVEALS ITSELF.

"I LOOK DOWN AT THE CONTENTS OF THE LONELY GRAVE. IT IS HARD FOR ME TO ACCEPT THAT THIS PUTREFYING FLESH WAS ONCE A LIVING BREATHING WOMAN.
"THAT MY EXISTENCE BEGAN AS A SEED GROWING WITHIN HER WOMB.

"I RECLOSE THE GRAVE. I HAVE LEARNED WHAT I CAME HERE TO LEARN.

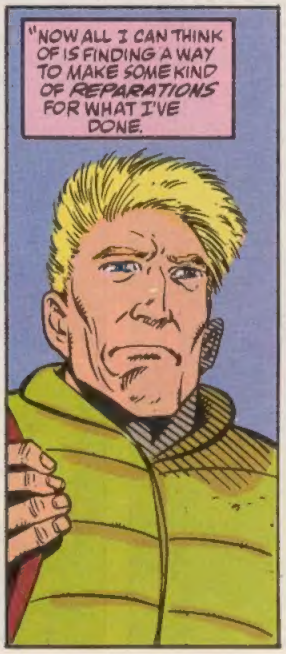

"I DEPART.
"I FEEL A GROWING SENSE OF URGENCY.
"THE LOOP MUST BE CLOSED, AND SOON.

"IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE ALL THIS COULD REALLY BE MY FAULT.
"ALL THIS DEATH, ALL THIS DESTRUCTION.
"I'VE TRIED TO SEPARATE MYSELF FROM IT ALL.
"I HAVEN'T BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL.
INSET
Drive-In

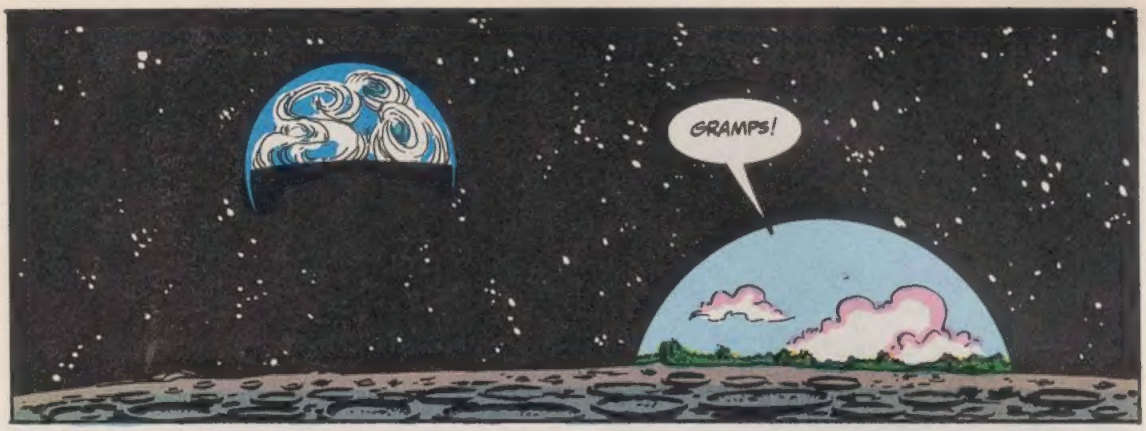
"MY NAME IS KEN CONNELL. FOR ABOUT A MINUTE AND A HALF I WAS THE SUPER HERO KNOWN AS STAR BRAND.
"THEN I DID SOMETHING... STUPID, AND THE WHOLE WORLD CHANGED.
"THE WHOLE WORLD.

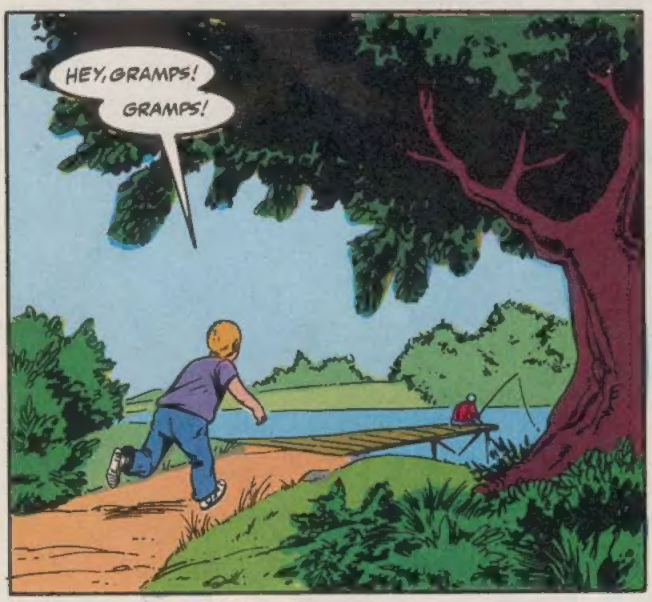
"I GUESS FROM THE MOMENT THE OLD MAN GAVE ME THE POWER I WAS TRYING TO RESHAPE THE WORLD IN MY OWN IMAGE.
"THIS IS NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND.

"I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND GLIB. I KNOW I'VE DONE SOME TERRIBLE THINGS. I KNOW I WAS CERTIFIABLY INSANE FOR A LONG TIME AFTER I DESTROYED PITTSBURGH.
"MY MOST RECENT DEATH SEEMS TO HAVE HAD A CLEARING EFFECT ON MY MIND, THOUGH.



"I'M PREPARED TO DO ANY


GRAMPS!

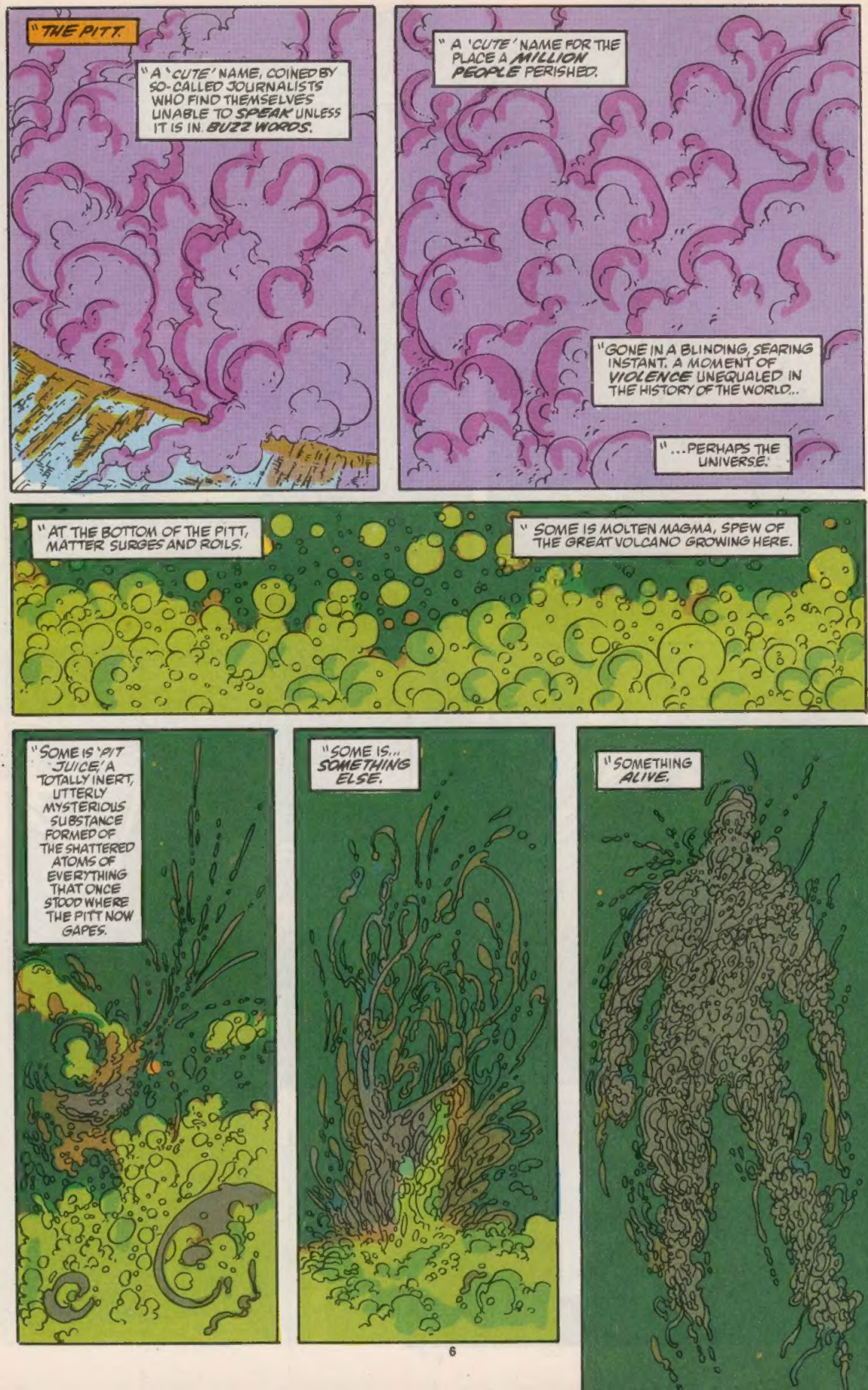

HEY, GRAMPS!
GRAMPS!

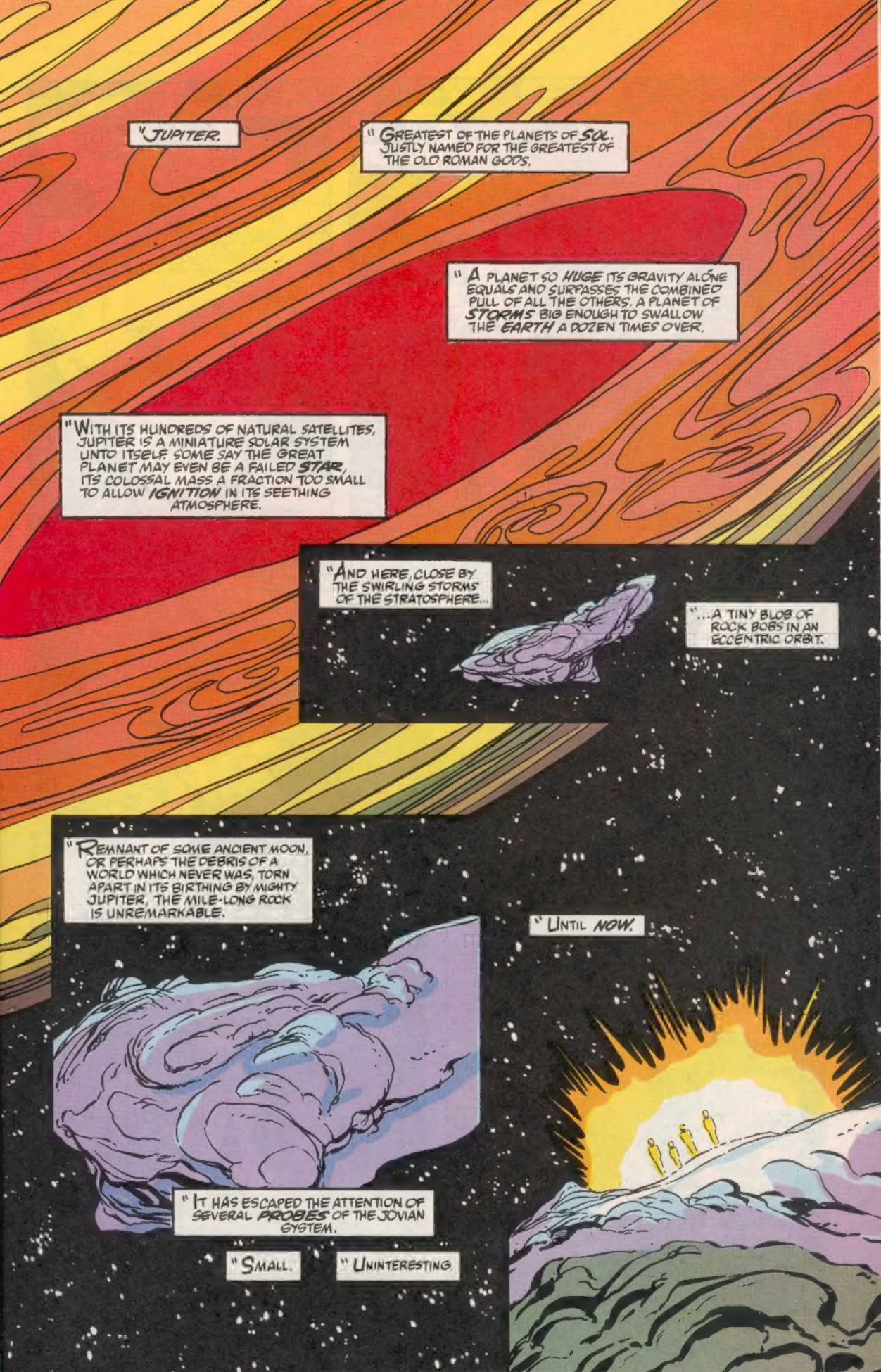
ARE YOU DOIN' SOMETHIN', GRAMPS? IT... FEELS KINDA FUNNY AROUND HERE.
HMM...?
SAY... YOU'RE RIGHT, BILLY. I WAS KINDA LOST IN MY OWN THOUGHTS... DIDN'T NOTICE.

YOU MEAN IT'S NOT YOU?
YOU'RE NOT USIN' YOUR STAR BRAND POWER?
NO.
I AIN'T USED IT HARDLY AT ALL SINCE IT BROUGHT ME BACK TO LIFE AFTER I FOUGHT TH' PRESIDENT...*
*STAR BRAND #18.

I WONDER WHAT...

"I'LL TELL YOU THE WORST THING ABOUT NOT HAVING SUPER POWERS ANY MORE...
"DRIVING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN MANSFIELD AND CLEVELAND EVERY DAY.
"YES, I GOT MY OLD JOB BACK AT THE MARCH OF DIMES. THEY WERE GLAD TO HAVE ME.
"NOT TOO MANY PEOPLE CRAZY ENOUGH TO DO THIS KIND OF WORK FOR THE KIND OF MONEY THEY PAY.
"STILL, MUSTN'T COMPLAIN. AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T ASK ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MONTHS JANE AND I WERE MISSING.
"JUST AS WELL. IT'S NOT EXACTLY SOMETHING YOU COULD SUM UP IN TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS.
"'WELL, SEE, I GOT TURNED INTO A SUPER HERO BY THIS FLOATING BABY HEAD...'
"YEAH, RIGHT.
"SO IT'S BACK TO BEING PLAIN OL' ROGER PRICE, FUND RAISER AND PART-TIME D.J.
"MAYBE IF THAT CHAT I HAD WITH STAN PAYS OFF..

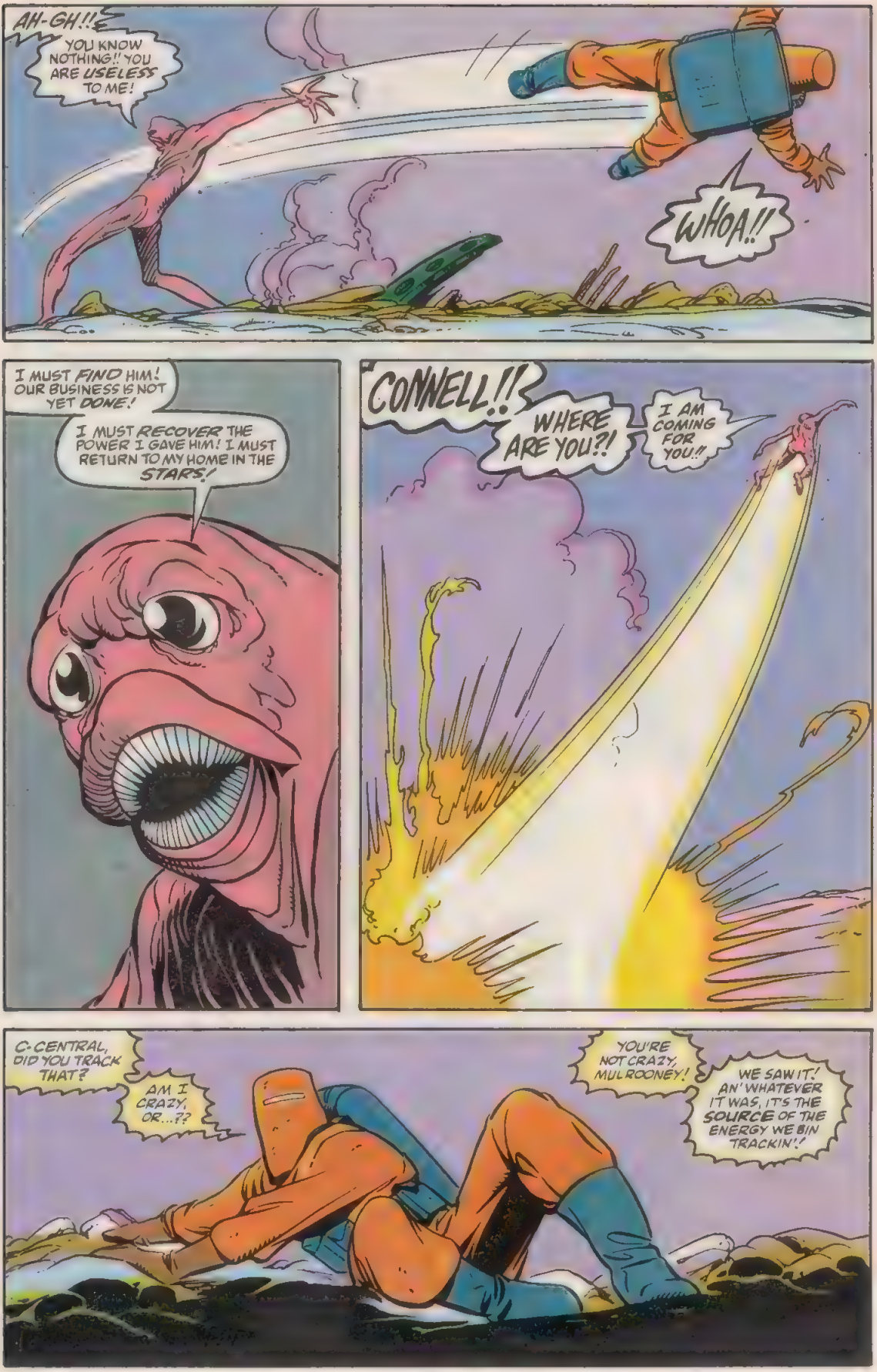

"THE PITT.
"A 'CUTE' NAME, COINED BY SO-CALLED JOURNALISTS WHO FIND THEMSELVES UNABLE TO SPEAK UNLESS IT IS IN BUZZ WORDS.
"A 'CUTE' NAME FOR THE PLACE A MILLION PEOPLE PERISHED.
"GONE IN A BLINDING, SEARING INSTANT. A MOMENT OF VIOLENCE UNEQUALED IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD...
"...PERHAPS THE UNIVERSE.
"AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PITT, MATTER SURGES AND ROILS.
"SOME IS MOLTEN MAGMA, SPEW OF THE GREAT VOLCANO GROWING HERE.
"SOME IS 'PIT JUICE,' A TOTALLY INERT, UTTERLY MYSTERIOUS SUBSTANCE FORMED OF THE SHATTERED ATOMS OF EVERYTHING THAT ONCE STOOD WHERE THE PITT NOW GAPES.
"SOME IS... SOMETHING ELSE.
"SOMETHING ALIVE.


"JUPITER.
"GREATEST OF THE PLANETS OF SOL. JUSTLY NAMED FOR THE GREATEST OF THE OLD ROMAN GODS.
"A PLANET SO HUGE ITS GRAVITY ALONE EQUALS AND SURPASSES THE COMBINED PULL OF ALL THE OTHERS. A PLANET OF STORMS BIG ENOUGH TO SWALLOW THE EARTH A DOZEN TIMES OVER.
"WITH ITS HUNDREDS OF NATURAL SATELLITES, JUPITER IS A MINIATURE SOLAR SYSTEM UNTO ITSELF. SOME SAY THE GREAT PLANET MAY EVEN BE A FAILED STAR, ITS COLOSSAL MASS A FRACTION TOO SMALL TO ALLOW IGNITION IN ITS SEETHING ATMOSPHERE.
"AND HERE, CLOSE BY THE SWIRLING STORMS OF THE STRATOSPHERE...
"...A TINY BLOB OF ROCK BOBS IN AN ECCENTRIC ORBIT.
"REMNANT OF SOME ANCIENT MOON, OR PERHAPS THE DEBRIS OF A WORLD WHICH NEVER WAS, TORN APART IN ITS BIRTHING BY MIGHTY JUPITER, THE MILE-LONG ROCK IS UNREMARKABLE.
"UNTIL NOW.
"IT HAS ESCAPED THE ATTENTION OF SEVERAL PROBES OF THE JOVIAN SYSTEM.
"SMALL.
"UNINTERESTING.

WHAT IN TH'...?
WHERE... WHERE ARE WE?
AND WHO ARE YOU?!
CALM YOURSELVES, GENTLEMEN.
YOU ARE IN NO DANGER HERE.
AND, AS TO WHO I AM...
...FOR THE SAKE OF EASY REFERENCE, YOU MIGHT CALL ME KEN CONNELL, JUNIOR.
"KEN..."
WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT IS THIS?!
I'M KEN CONNELL, AND YOU'RE TOO OLD TO BE MY SON!
WAIT...
YOU'RE...YOU'RE MADDIE'S KID, AREN'T YOU?
YOU'VE BEEN OLDER EACH TIME I'VE SEEN YOU. NOW...
NOW I AM PHYSICALLY MATURE, ROGER.
NOW MY BODY BEGINS THE LONG SLOW DECLINE TOWARD DEATH.
DEATH?
BUT... YOU'RE TH' STAR CHILD, RIGHT? AN' YOU TOLD ME ANYONE WITH THIS HERE STAR BRAND POWER COULD NEVER REALLY DIE.
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "THIS HERE?" YOU'VE GOT IT, TOO??

YES, FATHER.
SINCE MY BIRTH, I HAVE SHARED THE POWER WHICH I INHERITED FROM YOU. I PLACED IT INTO ROGER PRICE WHEN I RESURRECTED HIM.
I PLACED IT INTO JACOB BURNLEY SO THAT HE MIGHT RESTORE ORDER TO THE WORLD WHILE I SOUGHT THE ORIGIN OF THE STAR BRAND POWER,
YEAH...
GUESS I AIN'T DONE TH' BEST JOB AS FAR AS THAT GOES, JUNIOR.
THE WORLD'S STILL PRETTY MESSED UP.
AND LIKELY TO REMAIN SO, JACOB. DO NOT BLAME YOURSELF
I HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT NO SINGLE BEING, HOWEVER POWERFUL, COULD HOPE TO CURE ALL THE ILLS OF THE WORLD.
ESPECIALLY NOT THE WORLD AS IT HAS BEEN SINCE THE "WHITE EVENT."
YOU SAID YOU WERE TRYING TO FIND THE ORIGIN OF THE POWER.. JUNIOR?
IS THAT WHY YOU'VE BROUGHT US HERE? HAVE YOU... LEARNED SOMETHING?
I HAVE.
I HAVE LEARNED THAT THE POWER OF THE STAR BRAND IS TOO GREAT FOR ANY MORTAL TO POSSESS.
SO GREAT, IT THREATENS TO DESTROY TIME ITSELF!

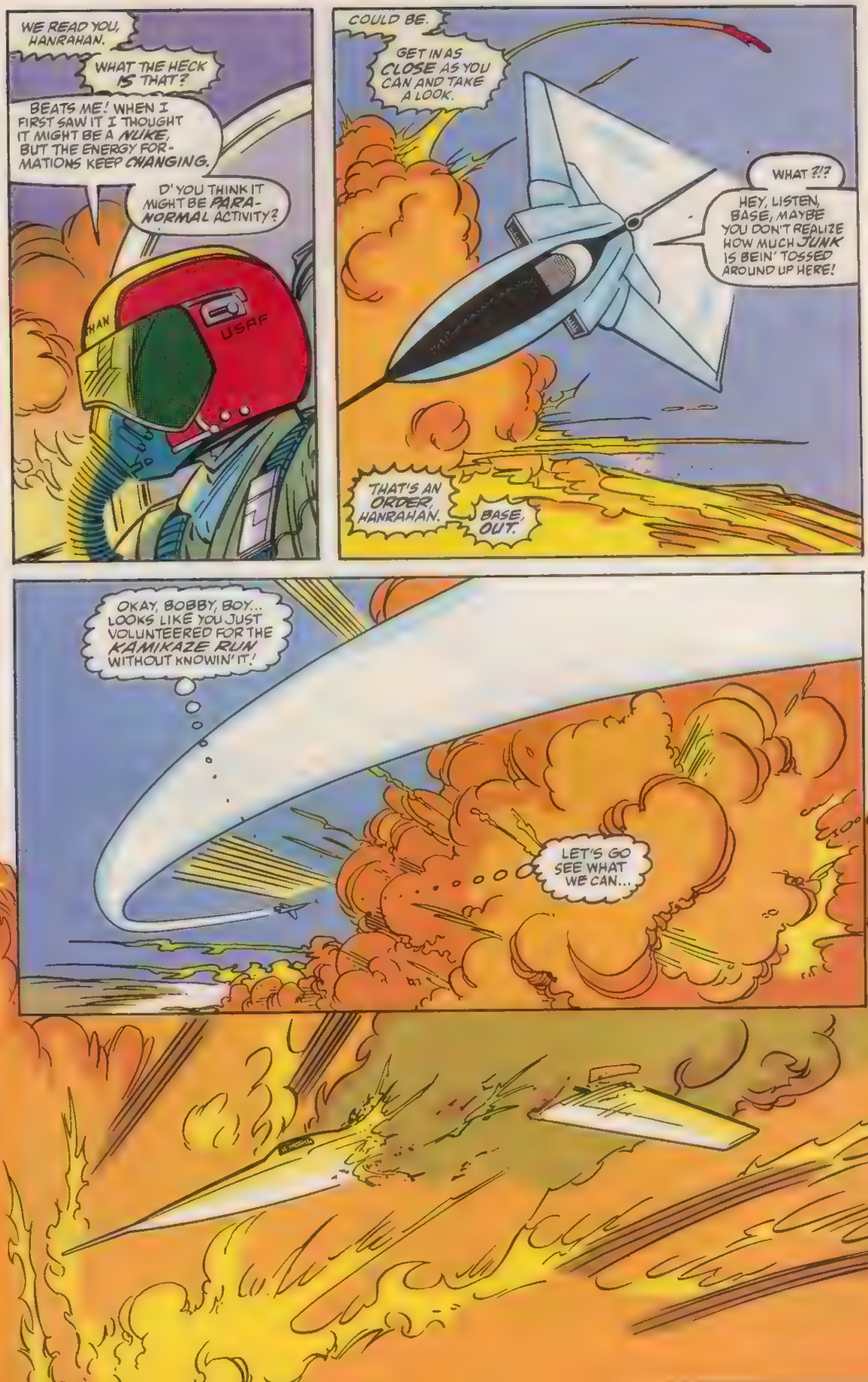
THE PITT...
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE TRACKING THIS RIGHT, CENTRAL?
I'M NOT GETTING ANY-THING BUT BACKGROUND CHATTER.
ROGER THAT, MULROONEY.
THERE'S AN INCREASE IN THE POWER CURVE AT THE EDGE OF THE PITT. AN' ACCORDING TO OUR INSTRUMENTS, YOU'RE RIGHT ON TOP OF IT!
WELL, I DON'T SEE A DARN...
HOLD IT!
GOT IT! HOLY SPIT! NO WONDER I COULDN'T ISOLATE IT! IT'S ALL AROUND ME!
LEMME SEE IF I CAN NARROW TH'...
CONNELL!
WHERE IS CONNELL?
YAAAHH!
WHERE IS CONNELL?!

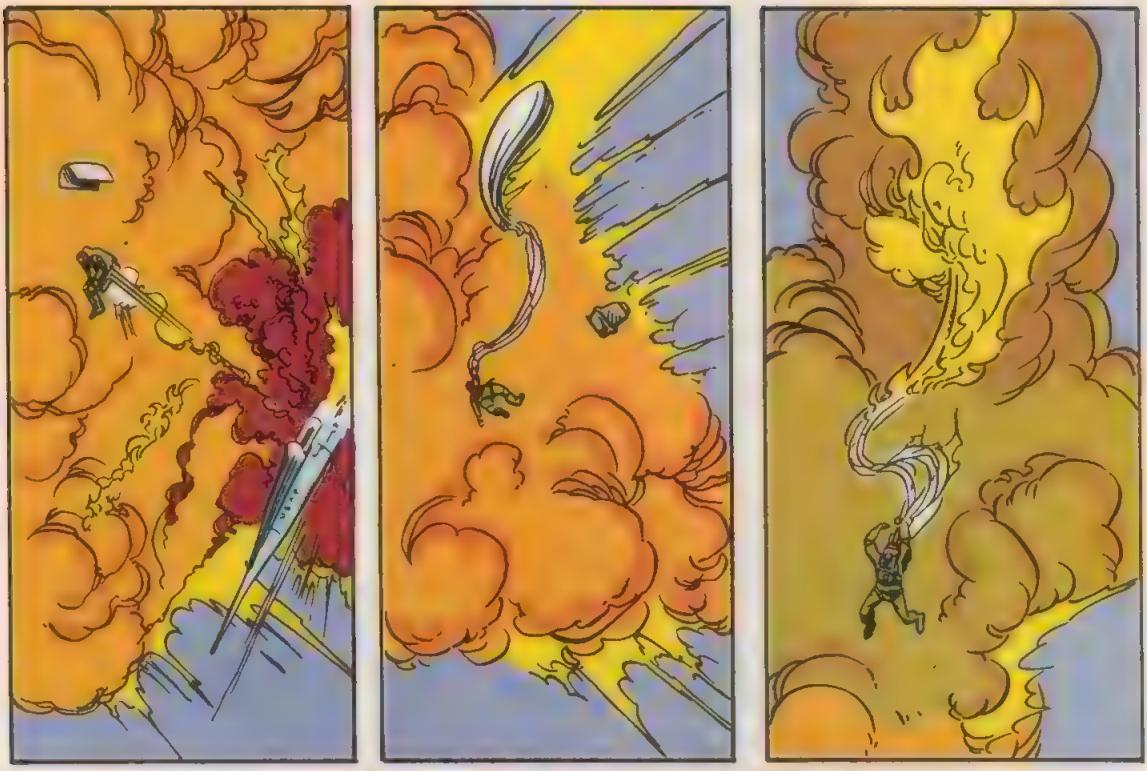

AH-GH!!
YOU KNOW NOTHING!! YOU ARE USELESS TO ME!
WHOA!!
I MUST FIND HIM! OUR BUSINESS IS NOT YET DONE!
I MUST RECOVER THE POWER I GAVE HIM! I MUST RETURN TO MY HOME IN THE STARS!
CONNELL!!
WHERE ARE YOU?!
I AM COMING FOR YOU!!
C-CENTRAL, DID YOU TRACK THAT?
AM I CRAZY, OR...??
YOU'RE NOT CRAZY, MUL ROONEY!
WE SAW IT! AN' WHATEVER IT WAS, IT'S THE SOURCE OF THE ENERGY WE BIN TRACKIN'!

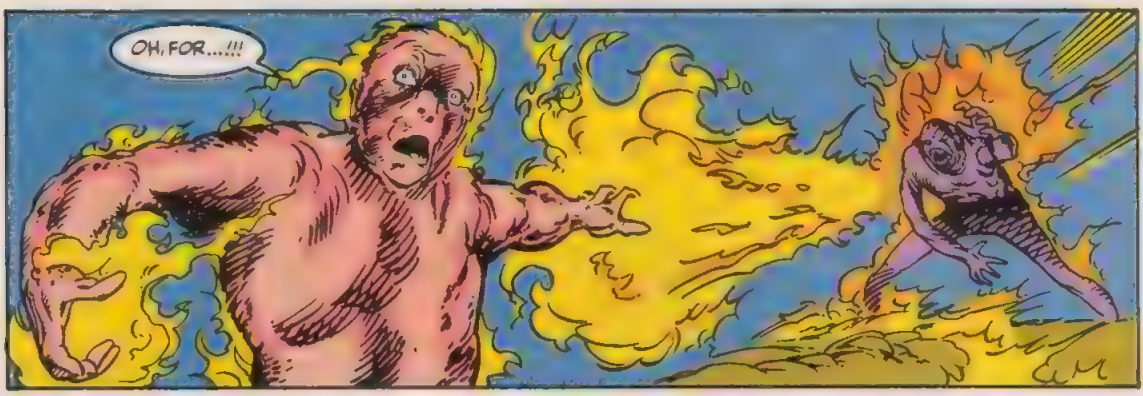
JUPITER...
WH- WHAT DO YOU MEAN "THE EXISTENCE OF... TIME..."
HOW COULD ANYTHING THREATEN TIME? THAT WOULD ENDANGER...
... THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE, YES. AND YET THAT IS JUST WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE AT STAKE HERE.
I HAVE LEARNED THE ORIGIN OF THE STAR BRAND. I KNOW NOW THAT IMPORTANT LAWS OF NATURE WERE VIOLATED IN ITS CREATION.
IF A WAY IS NOT FOUND TO RESTORE THOSE LAWS, THE UNIVERSE MAY SIMPLY UNRAVEL, LIKE SOME GREAT BALL OF STRING.
AND THAT, MY FRIENDS, WILL MEAN THE END OF EVERY-THING!
BUT, JUNIOR, HOW CAN WE STOP IT, IF IT'S AS BAD AS YOU SAY?
EVEN TH' STAR BRAND POWER...
A MOMENT...
YES... HE HAS FINALLY REGENERATED, AS I KNEW HE MUST.
JACOB, BEFORE I CAN ANSWER YOU, THERE IS SOMETHING YOU MUST DO...
"... ON EARTH!"
WHO...??

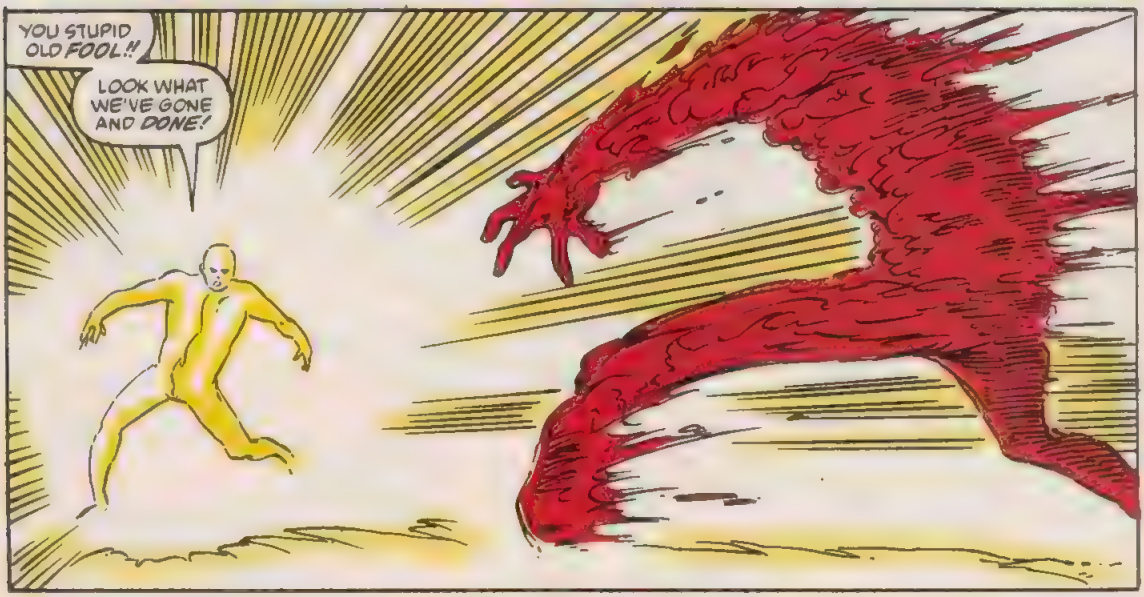
WELL, I'LL BE...!!
YOU LOOK LIKE THAT WEIRD THING I TURNED INTO AFTER I GOT KILLED IN MY BATTLE WITH TH' PRESIDENT! JUNIOR TOLD ME THAT WAS SOME KINDA REGENERATIVE FORM TH' STAR BRAND USES TO HEAL ITS POSSESSORS!
Y-YOU... YOU POSSESS THE POWER?
THEN YOU MUST HAVE GOTTEN IT FROM CONNELL!
WHERE IS HE? TELL ME, TELL ME WHERE CONNELL IS, OR I WILL BLAST YOU INTO ATOMS, AND IT WILL BE A LONG, LONG TIME BEFORE YOU HEAL FROM THAT!
NOW, DON'T GET UPPITY, MR. UGLY!
TH' STARCHILD SENT ME TO BRING YOU TO CONNELL AN' TH' REST OF US AS HAVE TH' POWER.
COME ALONG PEACEABLE NOW, AN'...
NO!

OW...
NOW... THAT WAS REAL UNFRIENDLY, STRANGER.
I'VE BEEN A MAN OF PEACE MOST OF MY LIFE..
...BUT IF YOU WANT TO PLAY ROUGH!!
BASE FROM GK907...
DO YOU COPY...?


WE READ YOU, HANRAHAN.
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?
BEATS ME! WHEN I FIRST SAW IT I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A NUKE, BUT THE ENERGY FORMATIONS KEEP CHANGING.
D' YOU THINK IT MIGHT BE PARANORMAL ACTIVITY?
HAN
USAF
COULD BE.
GET IN AS CLOSE AS YOU CAN AND TAKE A LOOK.
WHAT ?!?
HEY, LISTEN, BASE, MAYBE YOU DON'T REALIZE HOW MUCH JUNK IS BEIN' TOSSED AROUND UP HERE!
THAT'S AN ORDER, HANRAHAN.
BASE, OUT.
OKAY, BOBBY, BOY... LOOKS LIKE YOU JUST VOLUNTEERED FOR THE KAMIKAZE RUN WITHOUT KNOWIN' IT.
LET'S GO SEE WHAT WE CAN...



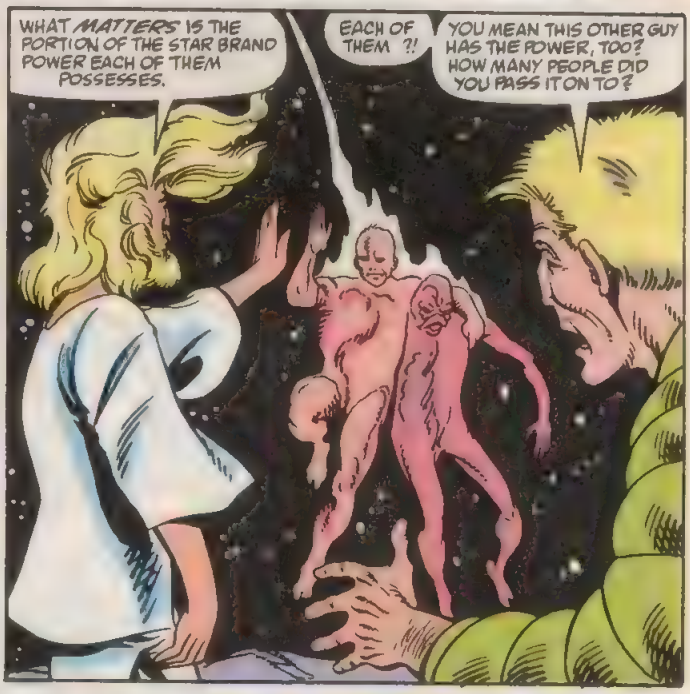

OH, FOR....!!!

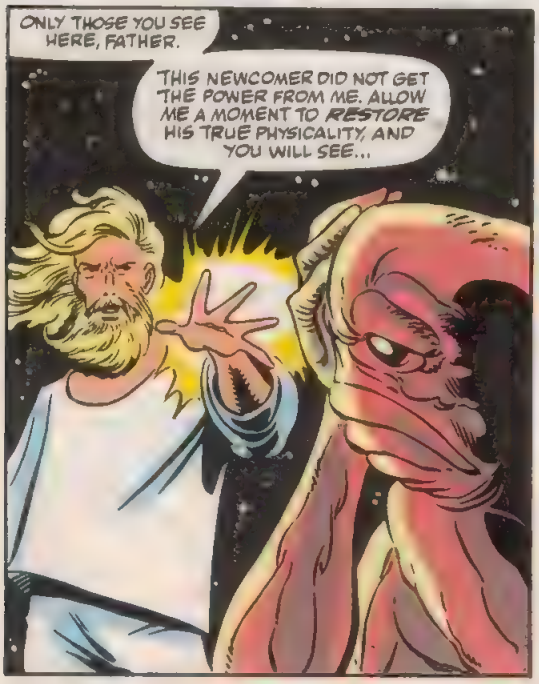

YOU STUPID OLD FOOL!!
LOOK WHAT WE'VE GONE AND DONE!

THAT OUGHTA HOLD HIM-- FOR A BIT ANYWAY.
NOW...
WHERE DID THAT PILOT COME DOWN?
HIS CHUTE WAS BURNED OFF...
DIDN'T SEE HIS EMERGENCY CHUTE OPEN...
PIECES OF HIS PLANE SCATTERED FOR MILES!
HE MAY NOT BE MUCH BETTER OFF.
WHEREVER HE IS, HE SURE MUSTA COME DOWN...
. . HARD...
HE'S ALIVE.
BUT HE WON'T BE FOR LONG. HIS INSIDES ARE MUSH. EVERY BONE SHATTERED.
AN' IT'S ALL MY FAULT FOR RISIN' TO THAT IDIOT'S ATTACK.
ALL RIGHT...
NO POINT IN CRYIN' OVER IT. I GOT THE POWER TO DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT IT.
I'M GONNA USE IT...!

JUPITER.
THEY ARE COMING.
JACOB WAS SUCCESSFUL.

WAS HE?
NEITHER OF THEM LOOK LIKE THEY'RE IN VERY GOOD SHAPE.
THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE, ROGER.


WHAT MATTERS IS THE PORTION OF THE STAR BRAND POWER EACH OF THEM POSSESSES.
EACH OF THEM ?!
YOU MEAN THIS OTHER GUY HAS THE POWER, TOO? HOW MANY PEOPLE DID YOU PASS IT ON TO?

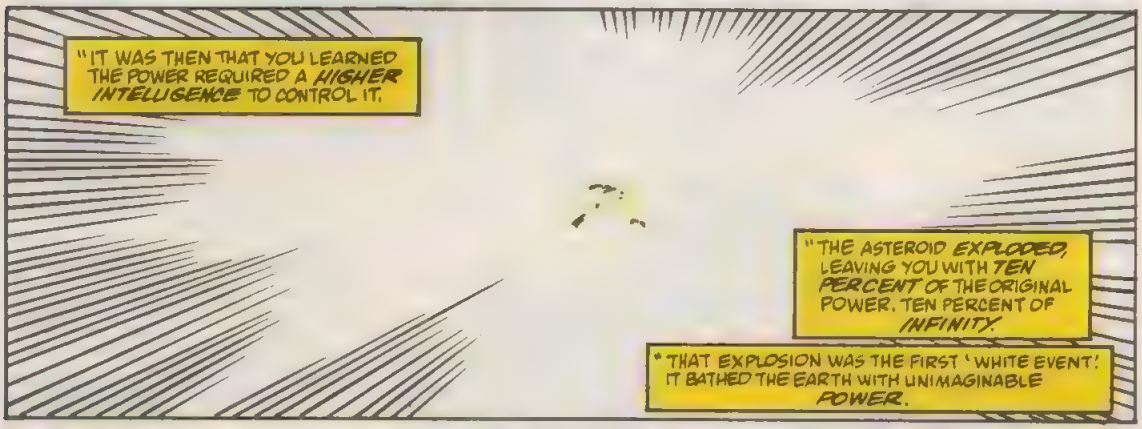

ONLY THOSE YOU SEE HERE, FATHER.
THIS NEWCOMER DID NOT GET THE POWER FROM ME. ALLOW ME A MOMENT TO RESTORE HIS TRUE PHYSICALITY, AND YOU WILL SEE...

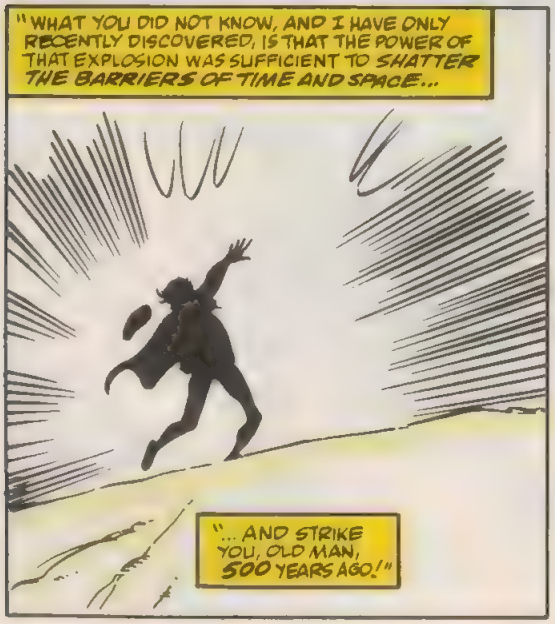
...IT IS WE WHO GOT THE POWER FROM HIM!
THE OLD MAN!!
THE ONE WHO GAVE ME THE STAR BRAND IN THE FIRST PLACE!!

BUT HE'S DEAD!
I KILLED HIM ONCE AND FOR ALL BEFORE. BEFORE.
...BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF PITTSBURGH, YES.
BUT, AS YOU, YOURSELF KNOW, FATHER, NO ONE WHO HAS POSSESSED THE POWER OF THE STAR BRAND CAN EVER TRULY DIE.
YES... I REMEMBER NOW. CONNELL KILLED ME. BLASTED ME INTO ATOMS.
THEN... SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED. SOMETHING HUGE... UNSPEAKABLY HORRIBLE. THE UNLEASHING OF POWER SUCH AS I'VE NOT SEEN SINCE I TRIED TO PUT THE STAR BRAND POWER INTO THAT ASTEROID...
YES. IT WAS THE SAME POWER, IN FACT...
... A SECOND "WHITE EVENT."
BUT... JUNIOR, I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!
YOU'VE ASSEMBLED EVERYONE WHO'S EVER BEEN TOUCHED BY THE POWER. BUT WHY? WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO NOW?
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE OBVIOUS, ROGER, ONCE YOU SAW MY FATHER, THE OLD MAN, AND MYSELF TOGETHER.
LOOK AT US CLOSELY, ROGER. IGNORE THE SUPERFICIAL EFFECTS OF AGE AND HARDSHIP.
WE THREE ARE THE SAME MAN!

WHAT ?!!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? I AM NOT KEN CONNELL! I WAS BORN IN HOLLAND.. 500 YEARS AGO!
OR SO WE ALL THOUGHT.. AS MY FATHER ONCE THOUGHT YOU WERE AN ALIEN FROM DEEP SPACE
I NOW KNOW THE TRUTH TO BE NEITHER OF THESE THINGS. LET ME EXPLAIN.

"AS MY FATHER EVENTUALLY LEARNED, ON JULY 22, 1986, YOU ATTEMPTED TO DIVEST YOURSELF OF THE POWER YOU HAD COME TO THINK OF AS A TERRIBLE CURSE, BY PLACING IT WITHIN AN INANIMATE OBJECT.
"AS IT HAPPENED, YOU SELECTED AN ASTEROID.

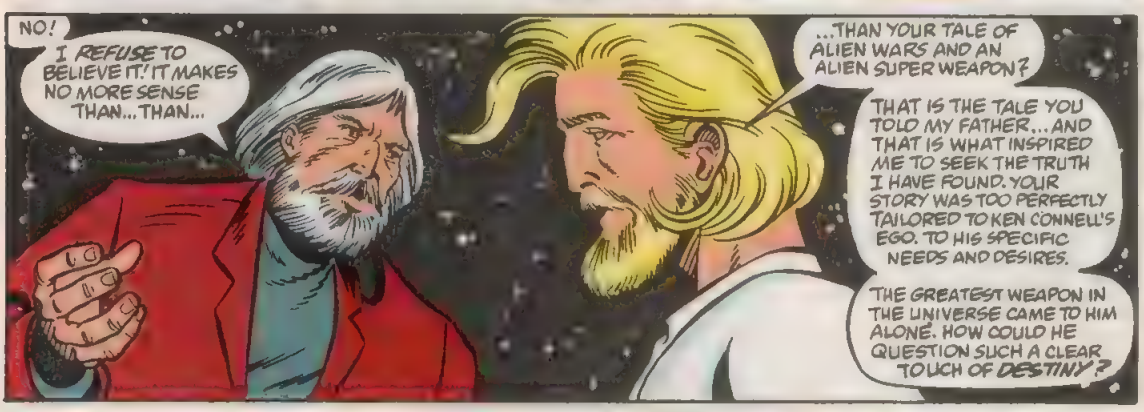

"IT WAS THEN THAT YOU LEARNED THE POWER REQUIRED A HIGHER INTELLIGENCE TO CONTROL IT.
"THE ASTEROID EXPLODED, LEAVING YOU WITH TEN PERCENT OF THE ORIGINAL POWER. TEN PERCENT OF INFINITY.
"THAT EXPLOSION WAS THE FIRST 'WHITE EVENT'! IT BATHED THE EARTH WITH UNIMAGINABLE POWER.


"WHAT YOU DID NOT KNOW, AND I HAVE ONLY RECENTLY DISCOVERED, IS THAT THE POWER OF THAT EXPLOSION WAS SUFFICIENT TO SHATTER THE BARRIERS OF TIME AND SPACE...
"... AND STRIKE YOU, OLD MAN, 500 YEARS AGO!"

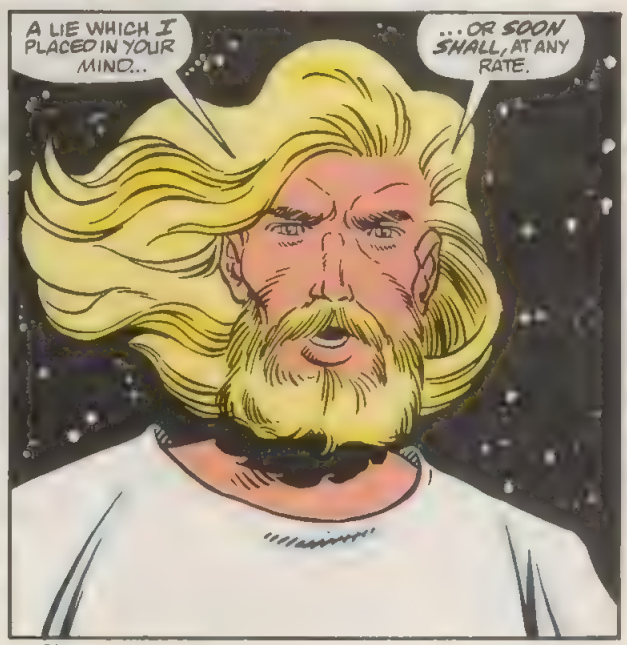
NOW... NOW HOLD ON JUST A SECOND HERE!
ARE YOU SAYING... THE STAR BRAND CREATED ITSELF??
YES, JACOB.
THE FRACTION OF POWER PLANTED IN THIS MAN GREW TO BECOME THE INFINITE FORCE BEHIND THE "WHITE EVENT."

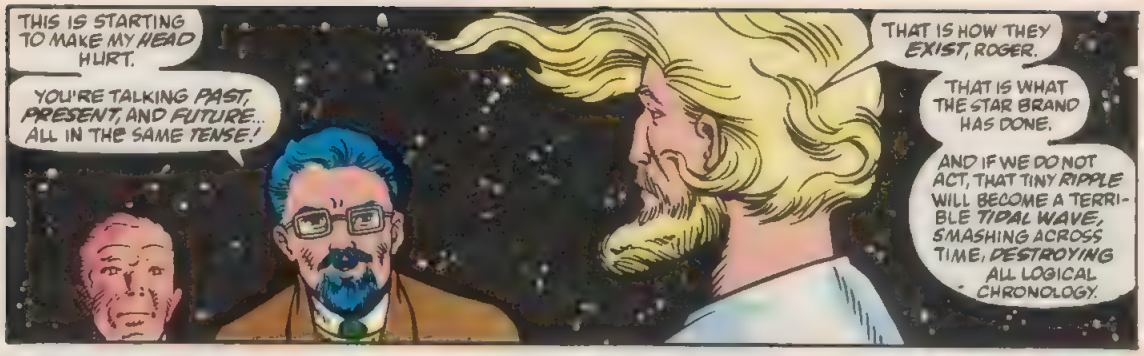
OH, COME ON! I MEAN, I MAY NOT BE THE BRIGHTEST GUY WHO EVER CAME DOWN THE PIKE, BUT THAT'S... IMPOSSIBLE!
IS IT?
THE EXPLOSION OF THE "WHITE EVENT" UNLEASHED AN ENERGY LIKE NONE EVER SEEN IN THIS UNIVERSE. IT RECREATED THE GENETIC CODE OF MILLIONS OF INDIVIDUALS ON EARTH. CREATED MUTANTS, MONSTERS... EVEN ONE REAL GHOST!

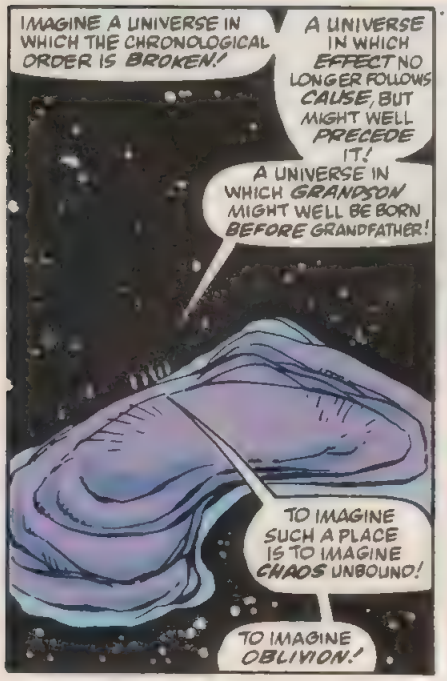
AND IT CREATED PARTICLES WHICH RUSHED OUT INTO SPACE AT SPEEDS MUCH IN EXCESS OF THAT OF LIGHT.
RECALL THE CENTRAL TRUTH OF EINSTEIN'S THEORY: THAT WHICH EXCEEDS THE SPEED OF LIGHT MUST REGRESS IN TIME.
THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT BOLT OF STAR BRAND ENERGY.


NO! I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT! IT MAKES NO MORE SENSE THAN... THAN...
...THAN YOUR TALE OF ALIEN WARS AND AN ALIEN SUPER WEAPON?
THAT IS THE TALE YOU TOLD MY FATHER... AND THAT IS WHAT INSPIRED ME TO SEEK THE TRUTH I HAVE FOUND. YOUR STORY WAS TOO PERFECTLY TAILORED TO KEN CONNELL'S EGO. TO HIS SPECIFIC NEEDS AND DESIRES.
THE GREATEST WEAPON IN THE UNIVERSE CAME TO HIM ALONE. HOW COULD HE QUESTION SUCH A CLEAR TOUCH OF DESTINY?

NO, NO! YOU'RE BUILDING YOUR WHOLE ARGUMENT OUT OF SMOKE! I CREATED THE FABRICATION OF THE ALIEN WARS, USED MY POWERS TO CREATE A SPACESHIP, SPACESUIT, ALIEN WEAPONS, BECAUSE...
BECAUSE
...BECAUSE YOU HAD TO. BECAUSE IT WAS A LIE WHICH KEN CONNELL WOULD NEVER DOUBT. A PERFECT LIE.


A LIE WHICH I PLACED IN YOUR MIND...
...OR SOON SHALL, AT ANY RATE.


THIS IS STARTING TO MAKE MY HEAD HURT.
YOU'RE TALKING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE... ALL IN THE SAME TENSE!
THAT IS HOW THEY EXIST, ROGER.
THAT IS WHAT THE STAR BRAND HAS DONE.
AND IF WE DO NOT ACT, THAT TINY RIPPLE WILL BECOME A TERRIBLE TIDAL WAVE, SMASHING ACROSS TIME, DESTROYING ALL LOGICAL CHRONOLOGY.


IMAGINE A UNIVERSE IN WHICH THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER IS BROKEN!
A UNIVERSE IN WHICH EFFECT NO LONGER FOLLOWS CAUSE, BUT MIGHT WELL PRECEDE IT!
A UNIVERSE IN WHICH GRANDSON MIGHT WELL BE BORN BEFORE GRANDFATHER!
TO IMAGINE SUCH A PLACE IS TO IMAGINE CHAOS UNBOUND!
TO IMAGINE OBLIVION!

BUT... HOW ARE YOU GONNA FIX ALL THAT, JUNIOR?
HOW CAN YOU STOP THIS HERE UNRAVELING YOU MENTIONED?
BY CREATING A MOEBIUS LOOP, JACOB
THE ANCIENT MYSTIC SYMBOL OF THE SERPENT SWALLOWING ITS OWN TAIL!

I PROPOSE TO BECOME MY OWN FATHER...
.. AND HE, IN TURN, SHALL BECOME THIS ONE WE KNOW ONLY AS "THE OLD MAN."

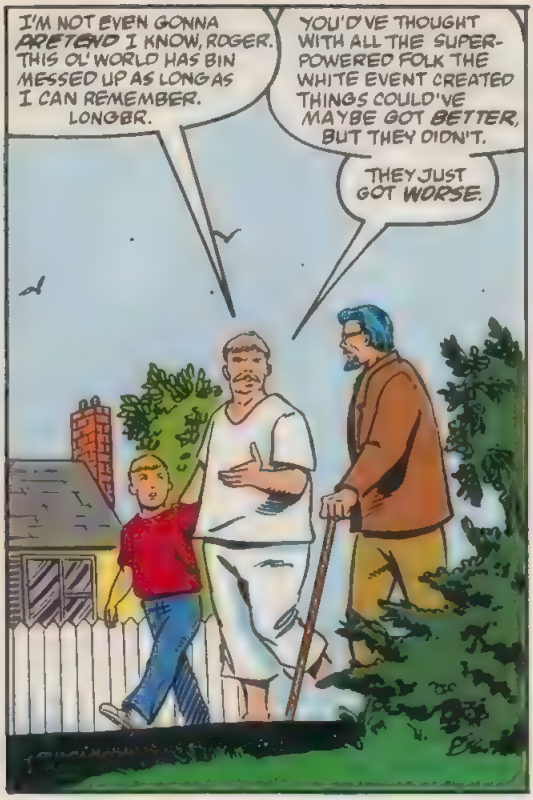
NO! THAT'S INSANE! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
I'VE STILL GOT A PIECE OF THE POWER! I WON'T LET YOU...
STOP!

LET HIM GO!
HE'S RIGHT! THE POWER MUST BE CONTAINED!
IT MUST BE SEALED OFF FOREVER!
AND THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO DO IT!!

WHAT??
DON'T BE A FOOL, CONNELL! YOU AND I HAVE ENOUGH POWER COMBINED TO CRUSH THESE WEAKLINGS!
WE COULD GO BACK TO EARTH! WE COULD RULE...
NO!
EVEN IF I STILL HAD THE POWER, WHICH I DON'T...
THAT'S THE WAY I USED TO THINK. I USED TO BELIEVE I HAD SOME KIND OF INSIDE KNOWLEDGE...
THAT I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW.
BUT I WAS WRONG. I SEE THAT NOW. A UNIVERSE CAN'T BE FORCED TO FOLLOW THE VISION OF A SINGLE BEING, NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL.
IT'S A COOPERATIVE EFFORT, ALL THE INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN THEIR OWN WAYS TO CREATE A WHOLE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS.
CONNELL, THINK WHAT YOU'RE SAYING! IF YOU LET THIS FOOL DO WHAT HE PROPOSES YOU'LL BE TRAPPED! TRAPPED FOREVER IN THE SAME UNENDING LOOP OF DAYS AND YEARS...
YES, I KNOW.
AND FOR ALL WE KNOW I MAY BE AWARE OF IT THE WHOLE TIME. LIVING AND REliving ALL THE STUPID, SENSELESS MISTAKES. KNOWING THEY'RE COMING...
... UNABLE TO STOP THEM.
BUT... FOR A MAN WHO'S DONE WHAT I'VE DONE... CAUSED THE SUFFERING I'VE CAUSED...
... SOMEHOW THAT DOESN'T SEEM TOO GREAT A PUNISHMENT!

NO! NO!!
I WON'T LET THIS HAPPEN!
I'LL DESTROY YOU ALL FIRST!
NO, YOU WON'T...
CONNELL...
PLEASE.
I'M...
..FRIGHTENED.
I KNOW YOU ARE.
I AM TOO
BUT THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE. DON'T YOU SEE?
WE CAN'T STOP IT. IT'S ALREADY HAPPENED!
IS...IS THAT RIGHT? THIS WHOLE BUSINESS..
...HAS ALREADY OCCURRED. YES. KEN CONNELL, THE OLD MAN AND I ARE THREE PARTS OF THE SAME WHOLE. WE ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.
WHAT...WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE WE DO FIRST, THEN..SON?
FIRST, THE THREE PARTS MUST BE FUSED INTO ONE. WE THREE MUST BECOME THE SINGLE ENTITY REQUIRED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK.
THEN, THE LAST IOTA OF POWER MUST BE DRAWN FROM THESE TWO GENTLEMEN. NO TRACE OF THE STAR BRAND ENERGY MUST EXIST ANYWHERE BUT IN THE SINGLE BEING WE THREE SHALL BECOME.
THEN..
...WE SHALL SEE...

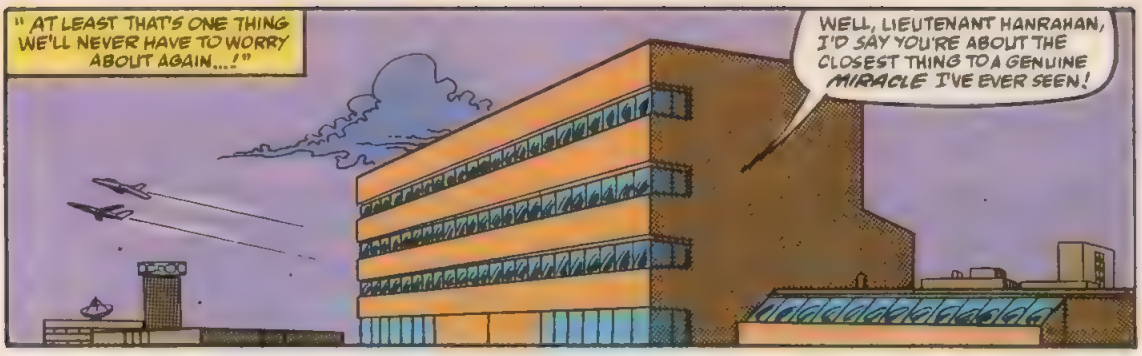
NEAR THE PITT.
THE HEAT OF THE GREAT VOLCANO STILL BRINGS FALSE SUMMER TO A WINTRY WORLD.
JUST HERE THE AIR IS CLEAN AND CLEAR...
...FOR NOW...
GRAMPS...??
GRAMPS!
YOU'RE OKAY!
WHEN THAT ENERGY BALL CAME AN' LIFTED ME OFF TH' MOON AN' BROUGHT ME DOWN HERE I GOT SCARED SOMETHIN' HAD HAPPENED TO YOU.
NO...NOTHIN' TOO BAD, ANYWAY.
GUESS I'M OKAY, BILLY. GUESS MAYBE THE WORLD HAS A CHANCE AT BEIN' OKAY NOW.
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GRAMPS?
WHO'S THIS?
THIS HERE IS MR. PRICE, BILLY. HIM AND ME, WELL... WE JUST HAD OURSELVES A LITTLE BIT OF AN ADVENTURE.
YEAH, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.
YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS GOING TO GIVE EVERYTHING A CHANCE TO GET BACK ON AN EVEN KEEL, THOUGH, BURNLEY?
THE WORLD IS STILL SERIOUSLY MESSED UP.
PARANORMALS EVERYWHERE. THREATS OF WAR.
AND THAT VOLCANO IN THE PITT...


I'M NOT EVEN GONNA *PRETEND* I KNOW, ROGER. THIS OL' WORLD HAS BIN MESSED UP AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER. LONGER.
YOU'D'VE THOUGHT WITH ALL THE SUPER-POWERED FOLK THE WHITE EVENT CREATED THINGS COULD'VE MAYBE GOT *BETTER*, BUT THEY DIDN'T.
THEY JUST GOT *WORSE*.

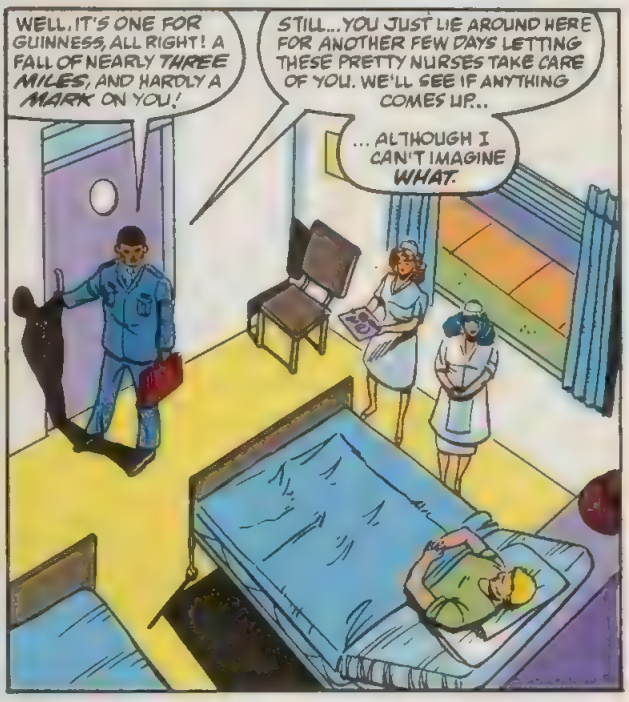
WELL... NOW CONNELL AND HIS KID AND THE OLD MAN ARE BACK IN *TIME* SOMEWHERES, FIVE HUNDRED YEARS BACK, WANDERIN' 'ROUND WITH SELF-IMPOSED *AMNESIA*, KNOWIN' ONLY THAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED T'BE SOME KIND OF *ROYALTY*.
AN' THAT THEY GOTTA BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME, TO PICK UP THAT FIRST PIECE OF STAR BRAND ENERGY.
YOU THINK THEY'LL... *HE'LL* BE THERE?

GUESS HE *HAS TO BE*, ROGER, OR WE WOULDN'T BE TALKIN' ABOUT IT NOW.
TH' WHOLE THING'S ALREADY HAPPENED, MAYBE *BIN HAPPENIN'* OVER AN' OVER FOR A LOT OF TIMES.
SEEMS TO ME THERE'S NO REASON TO ASSUME THIS WAS TH' *BEGINNIN'* OF THE CYCLE.
WHAT ABOUT CONNELL, I WONDER?
I NEVER *LIKED* HIM MUCH, THE FEW TIMES I MET HIM BEFORE THE WHITE EVENT. HE WAS ONE OF THOSE FALSELY SELF-EFFACING PEOPLE.
YOU KNOW THE TYPE, ALWAYS DIMINISHING HIMSELF SO OTHERS WOULD FEEL LIKE THEY HAD TO *COMPLIMENT* HIM.

STILL, IN THE END, I GUESS HE TURNED OUT TO BE AN *OKAY* GUY.
HE TALKED THE OLD MAN INTO GOING ALONG WITH ALL THIS. HE TOOK THE RISK, EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT MEAN HE'S GOING TO SPEND *ETERNITY* IN A KIND OF LIVING HELL.
WE DON'T KNOW THAT. WE ONLY KNOW THE STAR BRAND POWER IS SEALED AWAY NOW WHERE *NOBODY* CAN EVER GET AT IT.
LOCKED AWAY IN A NEAT LITTLE *LOOP* IN TIME.


" AT LEAST THAT'S ONE THING WE'LL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT AGAIN...!"
WELL, LIEUTENANT HANRAHAN, I'D SAY YOU'RE ABOUT THE CLOSEST THING TO A GENUINE MIRACLE I'VE EVER SEEN!

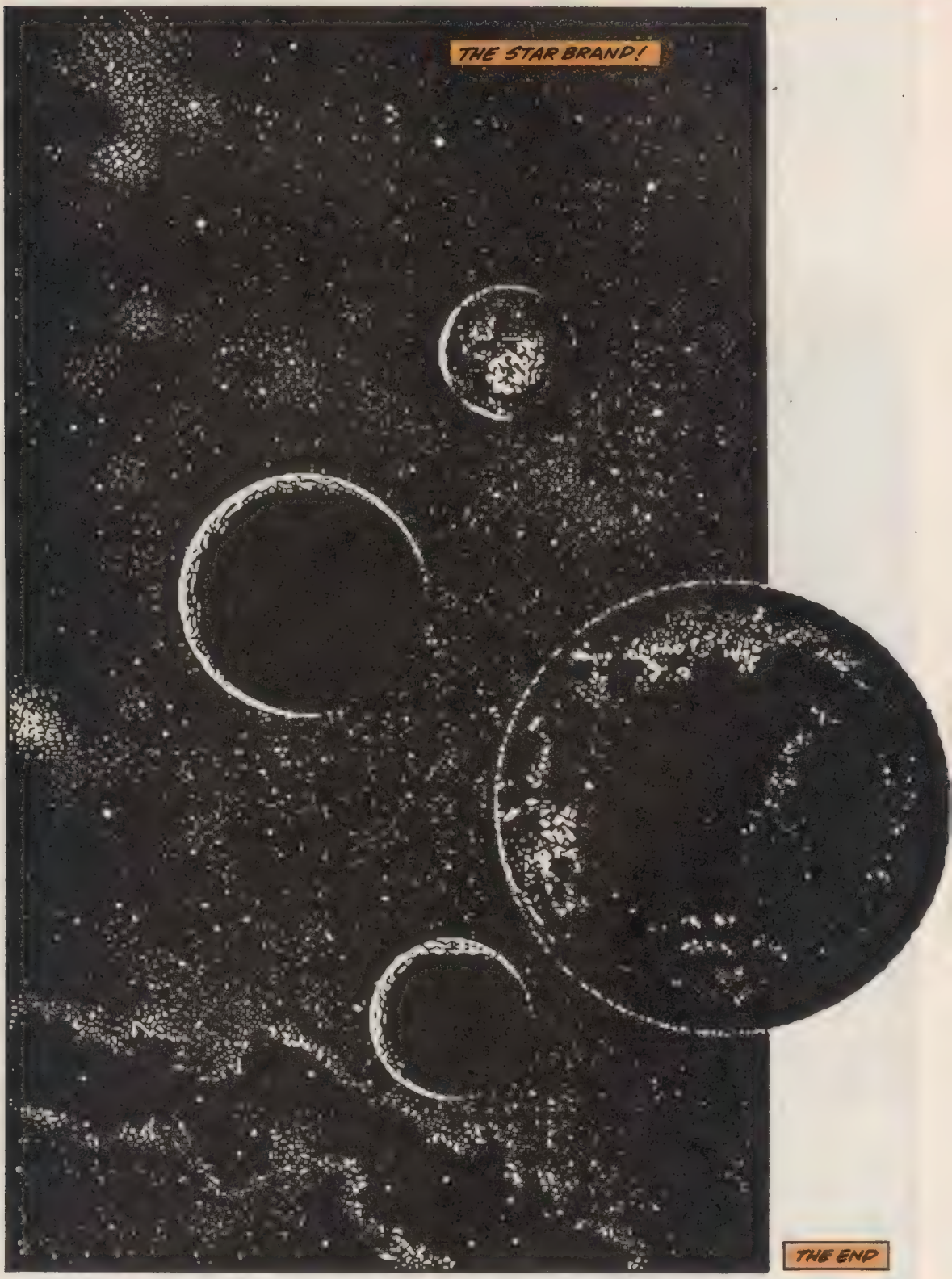
YOU'RE SURE YOUR CHUTE COULDN'T HAVE SAVED YOU?
NOSSIR, COLONEL.
I WAS PRETTY GROGGY FROM THE BLAST WHEN I EJECTED, BUT I REMEMBER MY SILK GOING UP IN FLAMES.


WELL, IT'S ONE FOR GUINNESS, ALL RIGHT! A FALL OF NEARLY THREE MILES, AND HARDLY A MARK ON YOU!
STILL... YOU JUST LIE AROUND HERE FOR ANOTHER FEW DAYS LETTING THESE PRETTY NURSES TAKE CARE OF YOU. WE'LL SEE IF ANYTHING COMES UP...
... ALTHOUGH I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT.

GUESS YOU HAD QUITE THE LUCKY DAY, HUH, LIEUTENANT? EVERYONE ON THE BASE IS BUZZING ABOUT YOU.
YEAH...
GUESS ALL THOSE YEARS MY MOM MADE ME GO TO CHURCH FINALLY PAID OFF, HUH?
STILL..

I WISH I KNEW HOW I COULD'VE FALLEN SO FAR AND END UP WITH NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT BUT THIS FUNNY LITTLE SCAR...

THERE IS A WEAPON IN THE UNIVERSE MORE POWERFUL THAN ALL OTHERS. NO MORE COVETED, FEARED, LOVED OR HATED THING EXISTS. ONLY A FOOL, OR A MADMAN--OR THE **RIGHT** MAN--WOULD DARE POSSESS...



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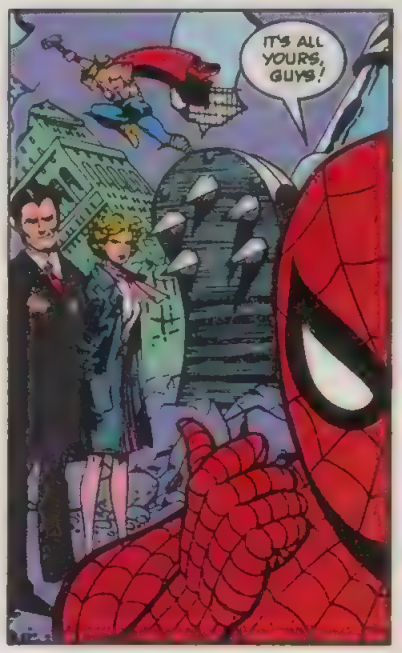

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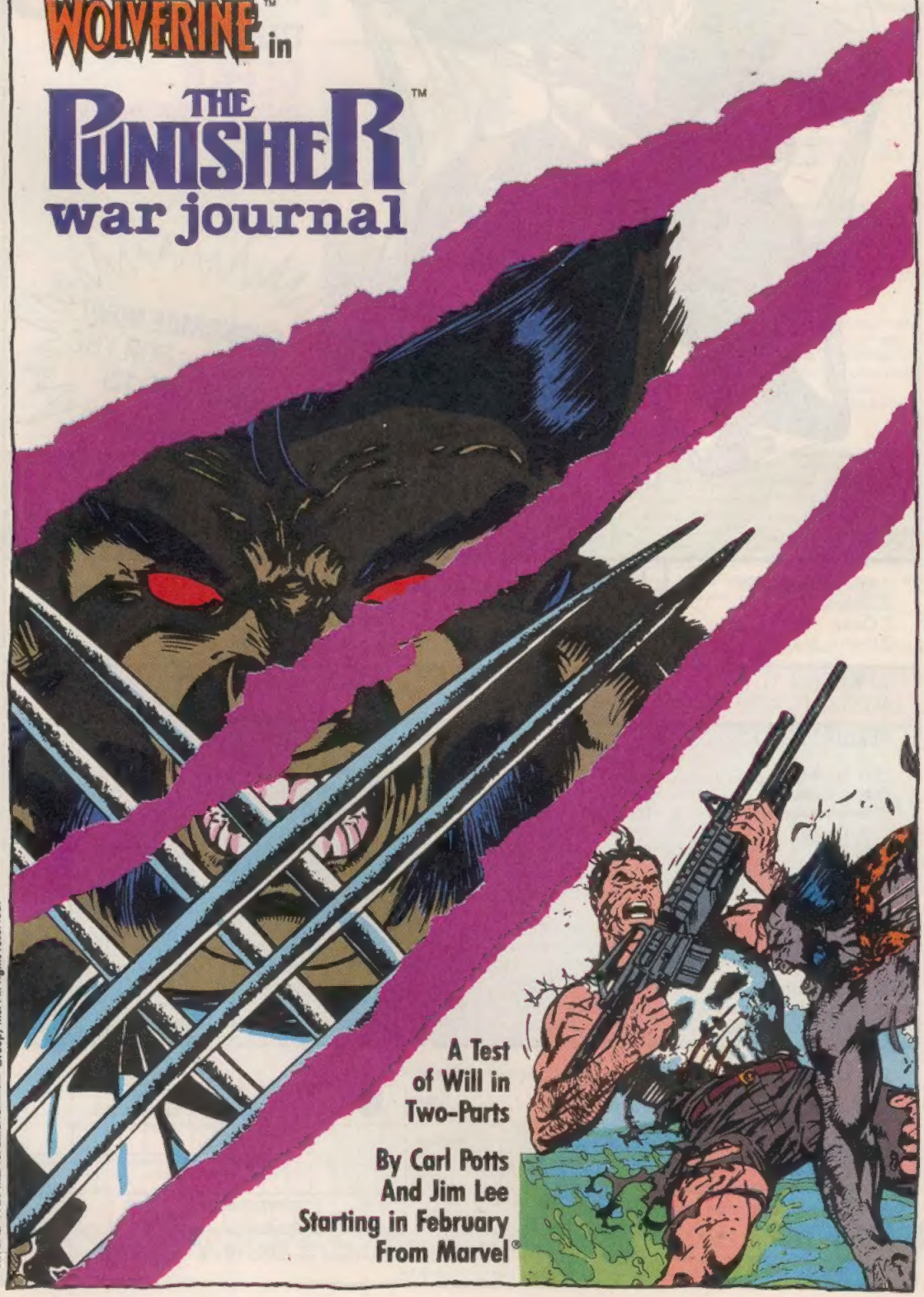

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THE OFFICIAL TIMELINE OF THE NEW UNIVERSE™

October 27, 1986
DAVID LANDERS is released from Shawano County, Wisconsin Jail. (D.P.7 #4)

October 30, 1986
After a self-aborted attempt to reveal his powers to the President of the United States, STAR BRAND wielder KEN CONNELL encounters his first paranormals: three escapees from a state mental hospital. Confronted with their individual powers of fear-projection, superhuman strength and agility, and a third, unknown parability, CONNELL blacks out and awakens alone. (STARBRAND #4)

October 31, 1986
KICKERS INC. breaks up a satanic cult serving as a front for illicit research in hallucinogens. (KICKERS #3)
Professor JENNY SWENSEN, in her M.A.X. armor, testifies before a Congressional committee investigating Fritz Krotze. As a result, the freelance terrorist, STEEL HAWK, kills KROTZE.
(SPITFIRE AND THE TROUBLESHOOTERS #4)

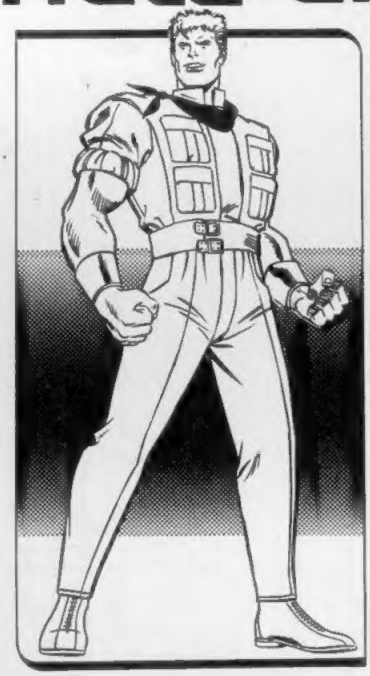
November 2, 1986
The renegade D.P.7 meet with JACK MAGNICONTE and KICKERS INC. The Kickers agree to investigate the paranormals' claims against the Clinic. (KICKERS #5)

November 5, 1986
Justice Warrior JOHN TENSEN and Justice Department agent REBECCA CHAMBERS, still living a paranormally-created delusion, track the paranormal "DAD", aka DAEDALUS DARQUILL, to his base in Cabo San Lucas, Baja, California. There, DARQUILL'S power to create delusions separates the two and he captures CHAMBERS and forces TENSEN to flee. (JUSTICE #5)
In Philadelphia, MARK HAZZARD thwarts an Arab terrorist attack on an Israeli diplomat he was hired to protect. (MERC #3)

November 7, 1986
JEFF WALTERS' mother arranges for an exorcist to examine her son, on the chance that his new powers are the result of evil spirits. Most of the other D.P.7 also decide to check out the option. DENNIS CUZINSKI refuses vehemently, and resigns from the D.P.7. (D.P.7 #5)

November 8, 1986
The attempt to exorcise the paranormalities from D.P.7 prove useless, revealing no demonic origin for their powers. (D.P.7 #5)
MARK HAZZARD kills two more terrorists attempting a reprisal for his part in the "Philadelphia Incident." (MERC #4)

November 9, 1986
Paranormal THOMAS BOYD, aka STALKER, is sent by DEREK SHININGSTAR to capture the youths comprising PSI-FORCE. (PSI-FORCE #5)
KEN CONNELL, possessor of the Star Brand, uses his power to attack a Libyan military base as an anti-terrorist warning. (STAR BRAND #5)



November 11, 1986
The "Old Man," original possessor of the Star Brand, approaches CONNELL in an attempt to recover the Brand. The ensuing battle moves into outer space, where CONNELL is left stranded when the "Old Man" dissappears. (STAR BRAND #6)
ANASTASIA INYUSHIN reveals her healing power to medical researcher DR. WILFRED LINDEN, agreeing to help heal his chronic disease that he might finish his promising, life-saving research. (PSI-FORCE #5)

November 12, 1986
CONNELL navigates his way back to Earth. (STAR BRAND #7)

November 13, 1986
DENNIS CUZINSKI runs afoul of a motorcycle gang and is hospitalized. (D.P.7 #5)
JENNY SWENSEN'S M.I.T. students, aka the TROUBLESHOOTERS, break into and steal the damaged M.A.X. armor from police custody, to rescue SWENSEN from prison. At SWENSEN'S request, KEN CONNELL uses his Star Brand power to stop TROUBLESHOOTER GIOTTI in the malfunctioning M.A.X. Armor, moments before its power pack explodes. The M.A.X. armor is rendered totally inoperative.
(SPITFIRE AND THE TROUBLESHOOTERS #5)

November 15, 1986
BOYD attacks the Psi-Force teens one at a time, disabling TYRONE JESSUP, MICHAEL CRAWLEY and KATHY LING before being finally defeated by WAYNE TUCHER and ANASTASIA INYUSHIN. Boyd escapes. (PSI-FORCE #5)

November 17, 1987
A second battle between CONNELL and the "Old Man" for possession of the Star Brand culminates in a devastating nuclear-type explosion, devoid of dangerous radiation, just outside of Pittsburgh, PA. The "Old Man" is again seemingly destroyed. (STARBRAND #7)

November 20, 1986
HORST KLEINMANN, forced to wear an exo-skeleton of motorized braces as a result of his encounter with Nightmask, sends the paranormal *vampire*, MIDNIGHT to kill KEITH REMSEN. (NIGHTMASK #4)

November 24, 1986
MIDNIGHT, a female paranormal who leeches "dream-energy" from others, is overwhelmed in her attack on NIGHTMASK. His enhanced dream-energy stores prove too much for her to absorb. She flees. (NIGHTMASK #4)

December 3, 1986
A recovered CUZINSKI returns to encounter the motorcycle gang which hospitalized him. He manifests his power fully for the first time, leaving seven men with third-degree burns. He steals a motorcycle and flees. In Sheboygan, Wisconsin, DAVID LANDERS, LENORE FENZL and STEPHANIE HARRINGTON take custody of HARRINGTON'S children as they leave school. LANDERS injures the children's father, CHUCK, in their retreat. (D.P.7 #6)

December 4, 1986
CONNELL reveals his Star Brand power to a young victim of toxic poisoning. (STAR BRAND #8)
STEPHANIE HARRINGTON is captured by freelance agents for the Clinic while visiting her injured husband in the hospital. She is returned to the Clinic. (D.P.7 #8)

December 5, 1986
CONNELL uses the Star Brand to disintegrate a stockpile of leaking toxic chemicals. (STAR BRAND #8)
FENZL, WALTERS and O'BRIEN are captured by freelance agents for the Clinic. They are returned to the Clinic. (D.P.7 #8)

December 9, 1986
LANDERS meets the WOODSMAN while escaping the Clinic's freelancers. He remains for three months, living off the land. (D.P.7 #10)

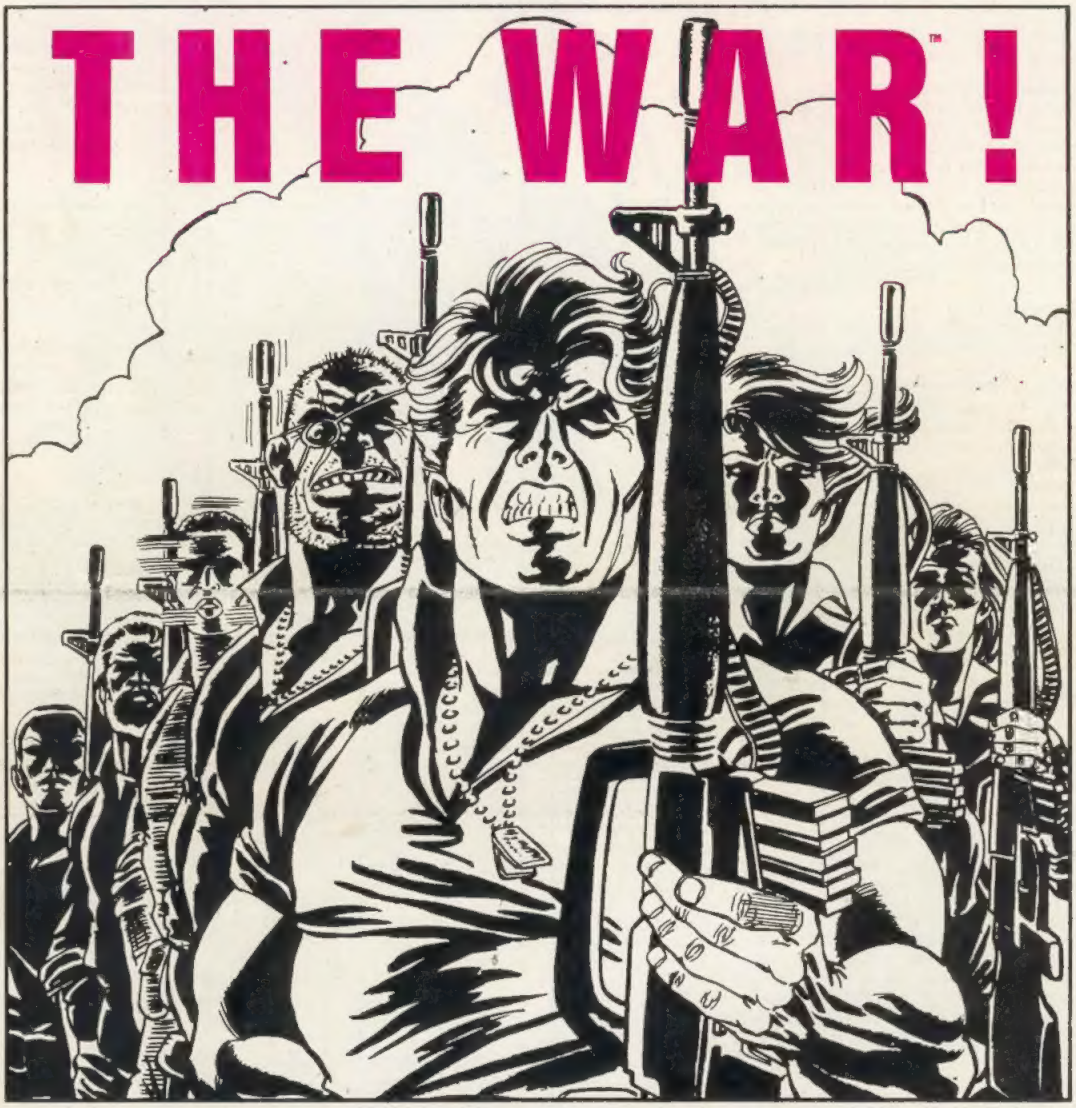
December 14, 1986
MAGNICONTE prevents the hijacking of a cross-country flight enroute to a football game. He misses the game. (KICKERS #6)

December 16, 1986
TENSEN, finding himself returned to New York City, encounters a drugged pre-schooler, SARA, in search of her father. TENSEN uses a new aspect of his paranormality to purge the girls' system of an involuntary drug injection, and takes her under his care. (JUSTICE #6)

DAILY BUGLE

35¢ ★★★★ Thursday, February 16, 1989

THE WAR!™



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